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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BUREAU OF EDUCATION,
WASHINGTON.

# THE NATIONAL RURAL TEACHERS' READING CIRCLE.

*Purpose.*—The greatness and future of the American Nation will depend in large measure on the degree of prosperity in its rural communities. The 50,000,000 men, women, and children who live in the open country and in rural villages and small towns must have more adequate opportunity for wholesome and remunerative living than heretofore. The work of the farm is to be made more intelligent and rural life more attractive. Nature and art are to be united in bringing to the American farmer and his family all that is sweetest and sanest and strongest and best in human culture. This calls for a new leadership which can come to rural communities only through the highest degree of education of a cultural and practical kind. Much of this must come about by the cooperation of Nation, State, and local community through all the different agencies now available, but the most important and most indispensable agent in the accomplishment of this task must be the rural teacher. More depends upon the rural teacher than on all other agencies. The improvement of rural life, as of urban life, is one of education.

The vital factor in education is the teacher. Without the well-educated, broad-minded, sympathetic teacher, any system of education can only be a lifeless mechanism. The rural teacher means more for rural education and rural life than the city teacher can mean for urban education and urban life. Therefore we must look to the country teachers and their preparation, and see to it that they shall be men and women of the best native ability, the most thorough education, and the highest degree of professional knowledge and skill. This will come to pass if a general understanding of the needs will create the demand, and secondary schools, colleges, and normal schools will redouble their efforts to meet the demand.

In the meantime, there is great need for a few leaders among the teachers in every county—men and women who, through their native ability and persistent study, have risen above the humdrum routine of the daily school tasks performed in a more or less per-

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functory way; men and women who have read broadly and thought deeply on the problems of life and citizenship, upon the scientific principles involved in farming, and upon the principles of education and their application to the conditions and needs of American rural schools.

It is to assist in finding and equipping such leaders that the United States Bureau of Education, with the assistance of a committee of the Association of State Superintendents, has arranged the First Rural Teachers' Reading Circle, open to the teachers of every State under the rules and regulations set forth hereinafter.

*Steps in organization.*—The first steps in the organization of the National Rural Teachers' Reading Circle were taken at the meeting of the National Education Association at St. Paul in the summer of 1914. The plan of organization was outlined in detail at a meeting of the Association of State Superintendents and generally ratified. Steps were taken at that time to appoint an advisory committee of State superintendents to cooperate with the Bureau of Education in formulating the plans for the course. Because of great stress of work, the final plans have just been completed and are now ready to be put into operation with the opening of the new school year.

*Cooperation with State departments of public instruction.*—This course is intended only for teachers who are in earnest and who are willing, by continuous study and unusual effort, to pay the price of recognized leadership and of a consciousness of work well done. It will not interfere with the teachers' reading circles as now organized and doing good work in many States. The purpose is rather to supplement these as a kind of *graduate course.*

The work is to be offered through cooperation with State departments of education. Teachers will be enrolled from the States whose authorities express their desire for such cooperation, and from these alone.

The advisory committee, appointed through the Association of State Superintendents, is constituted as follows:

Hon. John H. Finley, commissioner of education, Albany, N. Y.

Hon. Nathan C. Schaeffer, superintendent of public instruction, Harrisburg, Pa.

Hon. Charles A. Greathouse, State superintendent of public instruction, Indianapolis, Ind.

Hon. Josephine Preston, State superintendent of public instruction, Olympia, Wash.

Hon. George B. Cook, State superintendent of public instruction, Little Rock, Ark.

*Membership.*—It is not expected that this will be large, perhaps only a few in a county. It is desirable that teachers who apply for admission to membership should have a liberal acquaintance with the

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best literary works. None will, however, be excluded from membership on account of limited reading, since the main purpose of the reading circle is to remedy this defect.

Teachers may enroll at any time after September 1, 1915, and pursue the work as rapidly as they wish. It is not mandatory to organize local circles, although it is quite desirable for a group of three or more to form a local organization for mutual assistance and encouragement. The work is intended for mature teachers, who know how to study alone. The best results are probably attained by the individual teacher in silent, thoughtful reading in his own home.

*The study course for the years 1915–1917.*—The books in the course are classified under five heads:

I. Nonprofessional books of culture value;
II. Educational classics;
III. General principles and methods of education;
IV. Rural education; and
V. Rural life problems.

Ten of the first kind are listed and five each of the others. The lists of books have been selected only after much correspondence with several hundred educators who were requested to make lists of their selection. The choice for the first two-year course has fallen to the books enumerated below.

*Requirements for completion of course.*—The work is intended as a two-year reading course, although it may be completed in a shorter time. To those who give satisfactory evidence of having read intelligently not less than 5 books from the general culture list and 3 books from each of the other four lists—17 books in all—within two years from the time of registering will be awarded a National Rural Teachers' Reading Circle Certificate signed by the United States Commissioner of Education and the chief school official of the State in which the reader lives at the time when the course is completed.

*List of books.*—The following are the books selected for the two-year period 1915–1917, together with publishers' addresses and retail prices. The Bureau of Education does not lend books, nor can it place orders for them. Books may be purchased from local bookstores or from the publishers:

| *Title.* | *Publisher.* | *Price (carriage prepaid).* |
|---|---|---|
| *I. General Literature (10 authors).*[1] | | |
| Emerson's Essays | Houghton, Cambridge Classics | $0.90 |
| | Dutton, Everyman's Library | .35 |
| Goethe's Faust | Translated by Bayard Taylor. Houghton | 2.50 |
| | Translated by A. G. Latham. Dutton, Everyman's Library, 2 vols | each .35 |
| | Translated by Anna Swanwick. Burt, Home Library | 1.00 |

[1] Other editions may be substituted, as these are suggestive only.

| Title. | Publisher. | Price (carriage prepaid). |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** *General Literature* (*10 authors*)—Continued. | | |
| Hugo's Les Miserables | Translated by Isabel F. Hapgood. Crowell, 2 vols.....each.. | $1.25 |
| | Also in one volume..... | 1.25 |
| | Translated by C. E. Wilbour. Dutton, Everyman's Library, 2 vols.....each.. | .35 |
| Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter. | Houghton, Cambridge Classics..... | .90 |
| | Crowell, Astor Library..... | .60 |
| | Burt, Home Library..... | 1.00 |
| Homer's Iliad..... | Translated by W. C. Bryant. Houghton..... | 1.00 |
| | Translated by Lord Derby. Dutton, Everyman's Library..... | .35 |
| | Translated by Lang, Leaf, and Myers. Macmillan. | .80 |
| | Globe edition..... | 1.75 |
| Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies, Two Paths, King of the Golden River. | Dutton, Everyman's Library..... | .35 |
| | Longmans..... | 1.50 |
| Shakespeare's Dramas (5). | American Book Co. (Rolfe) for Individual Plays... | .56 |
| | Dutton, Temple Ed. for Individual Plays..... | .35 |
| | Ginn & Co. (Hudson)..... | .30 |
| Thackeray's Vanity Fair. | Crowell, Astor Library..... | .60 |
| | Burt, Home Library..... | 1.00 |
| | Dutton, Everyman's Library..... | .35 |
| Virgil's Aeneid..... | Translated by Conington. Longmans..... | 1.25 |
| | Translated by T. C. Williams. Houghton..... | 1.50 |
| | Translated by E. F. Taylor. Dutton, Everyman's Library..... | .35 |
| Van Dyke's Blue Flower, Scribner..... | | 1.50 |

(Select any five from above list.)

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| *II. Educational Classics* (*5 authors*).[1] | | |
| Froebel's Education of Man..... | Appleton..... | $1.50 |
| Pestalozzi's Leonard and Gertrude..... | Heath..... | .90 |
| Plato's Republic..... | Dutton..... | 1.25 |
| Rousseau's Emile..... | Heath..... | .90 |
| Spencer's Essays on Education..... | Dutton..... | .35 |

(Select any three from above list.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *III. General Principles and Methods of Education* (*5 authors*). | | |
| Dewey's Moral Principles in Education..... | Houghton..... | $0.35 |
| Curtis's Education Through Play..... | Macmillan..... | 1.25 |
| King's Education for Social Efficiency..... | Appleton..... | 1.50 |
| Thorndike's Principles of Teaching..... | A. G. Seiler, N. Y..... | 1.25 |
| White's School Management..... | American Book Co..... | 1.00 |

(Select any three from above list.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *IV. Rural Education* (*5 authors*). | | |
| Carney's Country Life and the Country School.. | Rowe, Peterson..... | $1.25 |
| Cubberly's Rural Life and Rural Education.... | Houghton..... | 1.50 |
| Eggleston and Bruère's The Work of the Rural School..... | Harper..... | 1.00 |

[1] Other editions may be substituted, as these are suggestive ony.

| *Title.* | *Publisher.* | *Price (carriage prepaid).* |
|---|---|---|
| *IV. Rural Education (5 authors)*—Continued. | | |
| Foght's The American Rural School | Macmillan | $1.25 |
| Hart's Educational Resources of Village and Rural Communities | Macmillan | 1.25 |
| (Select any three from above list.) | | |
| *V. Rural Life Problems (5 authors).* | | |
| Bailey's The Country Life Movement | Macmillan | $1.25 |
| Carver's Principles in Rural Economics | Ginn | 1.50 |
| Foght's Rural Denmark and its Schools | Macmillan | 1.40 |
| Gillette's Constructive Rural Sociology | Sturgis, Walton Co., N. Y. | 1.60 |
| Wilson's Evolution of a Country Community | Pilgrim Press | 1.25 |
| (Select any three from above list.) | | |

*Addresses of publishers.*

Houghton, Mifflin Co., 4 Park Street, Boston.
E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.
A. L. Burt & Co., 52–58 Duane Street, New York.
Thos. Y. Crowell Co., 426–428 West Broadway, New York.
The Macmillan Co., 64–66 Fifth Avenue, New York.
Longmans, Green & Co., 443–449 Fourth Avenue, New York.
American Book Co., New York.
Ginn & Co., 70 Fifth Avenue, New York.
D. Appleton & Co., 35 West Thirty-second Street, New York.
D. C. Heath & Co., New York.
A. G. Seiler, New York.
Row, Peterson Co., 632 Wabash Avenue, Chicago.
Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, New York.
Sturgis Walton Co., New York.
Pilgrim Press, Boston.
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

BRIEF RÉSUMÉS OF BOOKS TO BE READ.

*I. General Literature:*

*Emerson's Essays.*—The editions offered include History, Self-Reliance, Compensation, Spiritual Laws, Love, Friendship, Prudence, Heroism, The Over-soul, Circles, Intellect, Art, The Poet, Experience, Character, Manners, Gifts, Nature, Politics, Nominalist and Realist, New England Reformers, etc. These give the best of the essayist's work, and throw a clear light on the essential quality of the writer's mind.

*Goethe's Faust.*—Goethe has been called "The poet of the universe," and his Faust the greatest and most comprehensive of all dramatic poems. Taking the mediæval legend of Dr. Faustus, the philosopher and magician, which had appealed to so many poets, Goethe has transformed and expanded it into the framework of this drama of the developing soul of the individual and of the spirit of world progress. In the legend Faust signs in blood a bond to the effect that if Mephistopheles will serve him faithfully for a period of 24 years he may then have his soul, and the terms of the bond are fulfilled. In the drama the service of Mephistopheles is to end and he is to take possession of Faust's soul when he shall cause him to say to the moment, "Stay, thou art fair." Through the years of long life Mephistopheles conducts Faust through the varied scenes of the little world of the home and domestic society, and through the larger world of state and public affairs, until he has experienced something of the full round of human life. When old and blind he receives from the Emperor, as a reward for his services, permission to reclaim the marsh lands

of the seacoast and colonize them with people who, in security, shall earn and ennoble their daily lives by their daily toil. Only when this task is partly accomplished, and with his spiritual eyes he sees the people living in peace and rejoicing in their work, is Faust satisfied. Then he says to the moment, "Stay, thou art fair," and dies. Mephistopheles claims his bond and assembles the host of his underlings to capture and carry away Faust's soul, but from above angels and archangels drive away the devils and bear the soul of Faust through the ranks of acclaiming saints and martyrs and holy women to the world above. So long as man strives, so long must he err; but a good man, through all his wanderings, has still an instinct of that which is true and right. The creative, productive, and aspiring forces of life, the feminine force of love and faith, draw us upward and on. Goethe began this drama in his early manhood and finished it, after a period of 60 years, in old age. This gave him an opportunity to fill it with his own experiences and their results in a way and to an extent unique in the history of literature. Those who read Faust at all should read both parts. Without this no true conception of the drama and its meaning can be had.

*Hugo's Les Miserables.*—Ever since Les Miserables first appeared simultaneously in nine languages in 1862, it has been accepted as one of the undoubted masterpieces of the world's fiction. Originally written in French, the genius of its author has made it peculiar to every time and people. Hugo's theme is the downtrodden, "the wretched ones" of society. The central figure, Jean Valjean, is an escaped convict who is set on the right road by a good bishop, and who thereafter devotes his life to repaying society with good for evil of his former life. Other leading characters are Fantine, the grisette whom he rescues, Cosette, the waif, the vicious Thenardiers, and Javert, the grim detective. Les Miserables is a novel with a purpose. The author is fired with a desire to uplift the lower stratum of society, to make one-half of the world know how the other half lives, but the art of the novelist outshines the text of the reformer.

*Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter.*—The best-known of Hawthorne's novels. This novel has been universally recognized as one of the most sincere and telling characterizations of the Puritan time and Puritan people ever written. Its style, its psychology, and its singleness of purpose, to which all of the threads of the story are subordinated, are alike worthy of careful study.

*Homer's Iliad.*—This great epic sings the wrath of Achilles, Peleus's son, and covers the last year of the siege of Troy. It is written in 24 sections or books. Menelaus, King of Sparta, received as a guest, Paris, the son of Priam, King of Troy. Paris eloped with Helen, his host's wife, and Menelaus induced the Greeks to lay siege to Troy to avenge the perfidy. The siege lasted 10 years, when Troy was taken and burned to the ground.

*Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies.*—This book contains lectures on books and their uses, the place of woman in modern society, and the arts of life. Some ideals of life are clearly and forcefully presented. The book is the most widely read of Ruskin's writings on social life.

*Shakespeare.*—Any five of the following dramas may be chosen: Hamlet, King Lear, Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, The Taming of the Shrew, As You Like It, and Much Ado About Nothing.

*Hamlet.*—No play of Shakespeare's has had a higher power of interesting spectators and readers than Hamlet, and none has given rise to a greater variety of conflicting interpretations. It has been rightly named a tragedy of

thought, and in this respect, as well as others, takes its place beside Julius Caesar.

Hamlet, naturally sensitive, receives a painful shock from the hasty second marriage of his mother; then follows the terrible discovery of his father's murder, with the injunction laid upon him to revenge the crime; upon this again follow the repulses which he receives from Ophelia. A deep melancholy lays hold of his spirit and all of life grows dark and sad to his vision. Although hating his father's murderer, he has little heart to push on his revenge. He is aware that he is suspected and surrounded by spies. Partly to baffle them, he assumes the part of one whose wits have gone astray. Except for one loyal friend, he is alone among enemies or supposed traitors. The king, recognizing his foe in Hamlet, does not delay to dispatch him to a bloody death in England. But there is in Hamlet a terrible power of sudden and desperate action. From the melancholy which broods over him after the burial of Ophelia, he rouses himself to the play of swords with Laertes, and at the last, with strength which leaps up before its final extinction, he accomplishes the punishment of the malefactor.

*King Lear* is the greatest sufferer in Shakespeare's plays. The elements seem to have conspired against him with his unnatural daughters, Goneril and Regan; the upheaval of the moral world and the range of tempest in the air seem to be parts of the same gigantic convulsion. In the midst of this tempest wanders, unhoused, the white-haired Lear; while his fool jests half-wildly, half-coherently, half-bitterly, half-tenderly, and always with a sad remembrance of the happier past. Nothing in poetry is bolder or more wonderful than this scene.

Edgar and Edmund, the sons of Gloster, are a contrasted pair; both are men of penetration, energy, and skill—one on the side of evil, the other on the side of good. Edgar's virtue is active, enduring, and full of device; he rises at last to be the justiciary who brings his evil brother sternly to punishment.

Cordelia dies strangled in prison; yet we know that her devotion of love to her father was not misspent. Lear expires in an agony of grief; he has found that instead of being a master, at whose nod all things must bow, he is weak and helpless, a sport even of the wind and the rain.

*Julius Caesar* is one of the most perfect of Shakespeare' plays; greater tragedies are less perfect, perhaps for the very reason that they try to grasp greater, more terrible, or more piteous themes.

Intellectual doctrines and moral ideals rule the life of Brutus, and his life is most noble, high, and stainless, but his public action is a series of practical mistakes. All the practical gifts, insight, and tact which Brutus lacks are possessed by Cassius.

Antony is a man of genius, with many splendid and some generous qualities, but self-indulgent, pleasure-loving, and a daring adventurer.

The character of Caesar is conceived in a curious and almost irritating manner. Shakespeare was certainly not ignorant of the greatness of one of the world's greatest men. But here it is his weaknesses that are insisted on. He is failing in body and mind, influenced by superstition, yields to flattery, thinks of himself as almost superhuman, has lost some of his insight into character, and his sureness and swiftness of action. Yet the play is rightly named Julius Caesar. His bodily presence is weak, but his spirit rules throughout the play, and rises after his death in its might, towering over the little band of conspirators, who at length fall before the spirit of Caesar as it rages for revenge.

*Romeo and Juliet*, apart from its intrinsic beauty, is of deep interest when viewed as Shakespeare's first tragedy. It is a young man's tragedy, in which Youth and Love are brought face to face with Hatred and Death.

To Juliet, a girl of 14, love comes as a thing previously unknown; it is at once terrible and blissful; she rises, through love and sorrow and trial, from a child into a heroic woman.

The action is accelerated by Shakespeare to the utmost: On Sunday the lovers meet; next day they are made one in marriage; on Tuesday morning at dawn they part, and they are finally reunited in the tomb on the night of Thursday. The tragedy does not close with Juliet's death. In the first scene is shown the hatred of the houses through the comic quarrel of the servants, while in the last scene are shown the houses sorrowfully reconciled over the dead bodies of a son and a daughter.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a strange and beautiful web of entanglements and cross-purposes, woven delicately by a youthful poet's fancy. What is perhaps most remarkable about the play is the harmonious blending in it of widely different elements. The marriage of Duke Theseus and Hippolyta surrounds the whole, as it were, with a magnificent frame. Theseus is Shakespeare's early ideal of a heroic warrior and man of action. His life is one of splendid achievement and of joy; his love is a kind of happy victory, his marriage a triumph.

*The Merchant of Venice.*—Although the play is named after the merchant, Antonio, he is not the chief dramatic person; he forms, however, a center around which the other characters are grouped: Bassanio, his friend; Shylock, his enemy and would-be murderer; Portia, his savior.

When Antonio first appears, he is oppressed with the sadness of having to render up his friend Bassanio to one who must henceforth take the chief place in his heart. The merchant questions him about the lady; and Bassanio, fearing to pain his friend, dwells little on his love for Portia and much on the motives of prudence which make his marriage with a rich heiress desirable. It is the same Portia who had seemed to deprive Antonio of his friendship, who afterwards, in the trial scene, when Shylock stands firm upon his foothold of the law and demands his "pound of flesh," gives him back not only friendship but life itself; and in the last act the lovers and their friend are united in a common joy.

*Thackeray's Vanity Fair.*—In Vanity Fair, Thackeray has produced a definite picture of English society at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is a "novel without a hero," as the author states, but this lack is more than compensated in the heroine, Becky Sharp. This clever adventuress is the prototype of the social climber who stops short at no means to attain her ends. Contrasted with her is the weak and amiable Amelia, the schoolmate whom she uses as her first stepping-stone; and around them cluster many types of social life—all drawn clearly and remorselessly by the satirical pen of Thackeray. In his ability to see under the surface and to depict the real person, and in his marvelous range of observation, from which nothing great or trivial escaped, Thackeray proved his genius for all time.

*Virgil's Aeneid.*—This is the "golden branch on the ilex tree of Latin literature." It is a wonderful poem written in 12 parts: The first 6 in imitation of the Odyssey; the last 6 of the Iliad. "The Trojan hero is led to Italy, where he is to be the father of a race and of an empire supreme among nations. * * * Arrived in Italy he seeks the underworld, under the protection of the Sibyl of Cumae. He emerges thence to overcome his enemies." The Aeneid was not perfected at the time of Virgil's death, and his friends Varius and Tucca edited it at the request of the Emperor Augustus. It has since become the heritage of the world.

*Van Dyke's The Blue Flower* is a collection of nine stories, each differing from the others in character and setting, and yet through all runs the quest of the Blue Flower—the Blue Flower symbolizing happiness.

In "The Source" Ruamie finds happiness through unquestioning loyalty to the faith which all but she have forgotten. In "The Mill" Mortimor seeks the Blue Flower through chivalrous adventure, and finds it in faithful service. In "Spy Rock" Keene, spurning all that to the average man makes for happiness, seeks the Blue Flower in the rarified atmosphere of dreams. In "Wood Magic" Luke Dubois, spurred by ambition for material success, leaves his hut and his canoe in the north woods for the life of the town. He prospers mightily as Like Wood, but the soul of Luke Dubois flees back to hut and canoe. Artabas, "The Other Wise Man," hurrying in quest of his master—and happiness—is delayed through deeds of kindness to his fellow men, and after years of disappointment as he lies dying, thinking bitterly of his failure, finds that in each delaying deed he has clasped the Blue Flower. "A Handful of Clay" sadly bemoaning its uselessness and lack of beauty, finds the Blue Flower growing in the protection of its arms. In "The Lost Word" Hermas barters a word for what he believes to be the true happiness, only to find that in that word lies the happiness he sought. In "The First Christmas Tree" Winfried and Gregor, by a faith which leads them courageously through hardships and danger, find the Blue Flower blooming in the snowy forests of Eighth Century Germany.

*II. Educational Classics:*

*Froebel's Education of Man.*—In this classic Froebel gives the quintescence of modern educational practice. Here the teacher is led to realize that self-activity is the keynote in modern education; that play is the most sacred right of childhood and must be given its place in the curriculum; that knowledge must not be taught as a shapeless mass of facts, but must be vitalized through interrelations with the pupils' lives; that effective instruction is not measured quantitatively by book knowledge, but by the students' ability to make their learning serve their needs. These are Froebel's vital contribution to educational theory.

*Pestalozzi's Leonard and Gertrude.*—This is the greatest of the Swiss educator's writings. "It gives a homely and touching picture of life among the lowly and shows how a good woman uses her opportunities for uplifting and educating first her own family and then her neighbors. In this work she is aided by the village schoolmaster and the magistrate, who are inspired by her example and leadership. It gives a picture of the redemption of the village Bonal by helping the people to help themselves; and Bonal is the world.

*Plato's Republic.*—To a Greek mind above all others life was nothing without the social environment; and justice, the proper ruling of life, of all virtues, could least be realized apart from a community. Hence Plato deemed it wise to imagine a form of society in which the ideal man might find himself a home, a state to which the philosopher might stand in harmonious relationship—such was the Republic. It was indeed an attempt to anticipate the work of future generations.

"Though it has something of the nature both of poetry and preaching, it is primarily a book of philosophy about the human life and the human soul, or human nature, and the real question in it is how to live best."

*Rousseau's Emile.*—This is probably the most famous of pedagogical romances. Its lasting effect was to lay the foundation of modern pedagogy. "From the hints contained in Emile, Basedow, Pestalozzi, and Froebel drew their inspiration and laid the broad foundations of modern elementary educa-

tion. Unsystematic, sometimes impractical, full of suggestion, it invests the revolutionary ideas of its author with his customary charm."

*Spencer's Essays on Education.*—This is the first modern presentation of education—intellectual, moral, and physical—at least in the English tongue, based on the new scientific tendencies. The essays emphasize the new purpose, aim, and method of education. The purpose of education is defined as "preparation for complete living"; and this in turn is judged largely from the point of view of the welfare of the individual, though of the individual as living in fully developed society.

*III. General Principles and Methods of Education:*

*Dewey's Moral Principles in Education.*—A treatise on the moral aspects of education from several points of view. Comprises the following chapters: The moral purpose of the school, the moral training given by the school community, the moral training from methods of instruction, the social nature of the course of study, the psychological aspect of moral education. Designed for teachers' reading.

*Curtis's Education through Play.*—This book is devoted to the problem of play as connected with the schools. It aims specifically to deal with the problem as seen by the school board, the superintendent, and the individual teacher. To this end it seeks to show the best methods of laying out and equipping school grounds, gives rules for the games best suited to school yards, both during the summer time and the school year. Its fundamental assumption is that, as play is a necessity to wholesome childhood, the opportunity for ti should be offered to every child, and that more and more the conduct of play is to become one of the regular activities in all schools.

*King's Education for Social Efficiency.*—This book analyzes and illustrates the ideal of social efficiency in modern schools. The school is shown as a social institution, owing its existence to social needs, accomplishing through social forces its work of training pupils, directing all educational effort toward making pupils efficient members of society.

The social center as an educational agency in the country is suggestively presented through an account of an actual social-center association and its work in village betterment in a small town in Iowa. The part of the home in training socially efficient children is discussed in two chapters, one dealing with the character-forming value of the farm home, the other with the work of the parent-teacher associations.

*Thorndike's Principles of Teaching.*—The purpose of the book is to make the study of teaching scientific and practical—scientific in the sense of dealing with real facts rather than attractive opinions, practical in the sense of giving knowledge and power that will improve the actual, every-day work of the teacher.

How to utilize the inborn instincts, interests, and capacities of children; how to come to the activities of the school with their experiences before and outside of school; how to get and keep attention and interest; how to allow for individual differences among pupils; how to stimulate and direct thinking; how to improve skill, taste, and character—these are some of the chief topics.

*White's School Management.*—The author has here discussed school government and moral training from the standpoint of experience, observation, and study. Avoiding dogmatism, he has carefully stated the grounds of his views and suggestions, and has freely used the fundamental facts of mental and moral science. So practical are the applications of principles, and so apt are the concrete illustrations, that the book can not fail to be of special interest and profit to all teachers, whether experienced or inexperienced. It will be

particularly effective in overcoming those two most obstructive foes of progress in school training—artificiality in motive and mechanicalness in method.

*IV. Rural Education:*

*Carney's Country Life and the Country School.*—The discussion in the book views the rural school as an immediate agency for rural progress, and to this end seeks especially to stimulate and assist rural teachers to local leadership. It emphasizes the social-service responsibility of the school, and lays down a program of work, showing concretely how this responsibility may be discharged by the individual teacher.

*Cubberley's Rural Life and Education.*—In the first part of the book the rural-life problem is set forth in its historical development, and the origin and present status of the rural-school problem shown. The second part sets forth specifically the present rural-school problem, and points out the fundamental nature of the remedies which must be applied for its solution.

*Eggleston and Bruère's The Work of the Rural Schools.*—This book deals with all essential subjects, buildings, grounds, sanitation, the centralization of schools, transportation, plans of instruction, agriculture, amusements, etc. It also considers the school, not as an isolated fact, but as a phase and an essential phase in the upbuilding of the rural community. The importance of the new rural school as an expression of a new movement in rural life is emphasized in its broader aspects.

*Foght's American Rural School.*—The book aims at fundamental harmony by facing the rural school away from the artificial interests which have hampered its usefulness in the past. It strives to place the school where it inherently belongs—in the midst of natural interests where it can prepare the youth for wholesome, contented lives on the farm—the only normal American life of our day. The book discusses school organization, administration and supervision, school buildings and grounds, indoor furnishings and art, gardens, nature-study, agriculture, industrial clubs, rural libraries, physical education, consolidation of schools, and other topics of vital interest.

*Hart's Educational Resources of Village and Rural Communities.*—This book is the work of a number of men and women of experience in the rural field. It sets forth the great main lines of community interest, activity, and resource. The book is intended especially to help rural and village teachers to become more completely a part of the actual life and hope and purpose of the community.

*V. Rural-Life Problems:*

*Bailey's Country-Life Movement* defines the new interest in rural welfare and discusses some of the reasons and some of the results to be accomplished. It is a supplement to the report of the Commission on Country Life appointed by President Roosevelt, of which Mr. Bailey was chairman. The book distinguishes between the country-life movement and the back-to-the-land movement; outlines the interrelations of city and country; suggests ways of developing community feeling without resorting to the dangers of the hamlet system or overemphasizing economic cooperation; points out some of the fallacies in the popular mind about the decline of agriculture and many other things of vital importance to modern rural life.

*Carver's Principles in Rural Economics* treats a phase of agriculture which has as yet been little exploited in textbook literature. It differs from other books on agriculture mainly in its discussion of every problem from the standpoint of national economy rather than from the standpoint of the individual farmer. Instead of explaining to the latter how to grow crops and make his

farm pay, the author takes up such questions as the place of agriculture in national prosperity; the characteristics of rural life; the significance of rural as distinguished from urban civilization.

What is good agriculture—in its national significance; why rural migrations are from densely to sparsely populated areas, while urban migrations are in the opposite direction; why agriculture is necessarily an industry of small units; why rural people are more generally self-employed than urban people; why they are harder to organize and upon what principles rural organization can succeed; why and under what conditions agricultural cooperation is desirable and possible—these and a number of other questions of tremendous practical importance in rural life are carefully worked out in the text, the emphasis always being upon the social rather than upon the business phase.

*Foght's Rural Denmark and Its Schools.*—The book tells the story of the most scientific of agricultural nations—a nation which has become what it is through a most remarkable system of rural schools. Part I deals graphically with the recent agricultural rehabilitation, including the struggle to build up the land, cooperation in the agricultural system, and the social life of the people. Part II outlines the work of the elementary rural schools, the rural agricultural schools, and the remarkable folk high schools. There is also a section on the rural-life movement in the United States. Finally the book contains suggestions for modifying our American system of rural schools to answer modern rural conditions.

*Gillette's Constructive Rural Sociology.*—The book seeks to view rural life as a community life, to portray its fundamental conditions, to detect its deficiencies, and to suggest directions of improvement. It aims to deal with the situation in a concrete, practical manner rather than abstractly and theoretically.

*Wilson's Evolution of the Country Community.*—This book treats the country neighborhood as a social unit and describes its history in American life from pioneer times to the present, with the changes wrought by economic forces. The school and the church, the grange and other community institutions are used as registers of the social changes effected. The experience of people in getting a living is exhibited as the force effecting the changes.

Among the chapters treated in the book are "The Pioneer," "The Land Farmer," "The Exploiter," "The Husbandman," "The Margin of the Community," "Common Schools," "Rural Morality."

The book condenses the philosophy on which Sir Horace Plunkett and L. H. Bailey and the National Country Life Commission acted in initiating the modern agrarian movement.

The purpose of the book is to show the need of a new type of rural institution adapted to the irresistible changes which are molding and reforming country life. The unit of social action in the country, which was in the land-farmer days the household, has become in modern times the community or neighborhood. The effect of this book upon the reader has been to plant in the mind faith in the future of rural society.

*Correspondence.*—For further information address

The COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
*Washington, D. C.*

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SIR: I hereby request to be registered as a member of the National Rural Teachers' Reading Circle as outlined for the years 1915–1917. I pledge myself to do all the reading required of me faithfully and conscientiously, and to report progress of the work from time to time to the local educational authority, as indicated by the State Department of Education in my State.

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